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ABSTRACT

This document is one of three products developed as part of a 2-year project designed to increase the motivation of minority young women to pursue occupations and careers that will be in demand in the future. It is hoped that these products will help schools and businesses to cooperate in conducting a mentoring program. This ideabook was written to help individuals to be effective mentors for minority young women. Used by mentors during a 2-hour training session, the ideabook is the basis for all mentor training activities and it includes general information about being a mentor as well as specific information about minority females and career development. It also contains descriptions of activities that mentors and students can complete during their time together. The introduction contains a short set of questions and answers on facts and figures about women and work. A chapter on the characteristics of mentors defines a mentor, discusses the importance of a mentor, and lists qualities that a mentor needs. The next chapter presents tips for being an effective mentor. Organization-related, job-related, personal, and other tips are provided. The following chapter, "Talking about Your Work," presents a worksheet for mentors designed to help them identify some specific topics about their work to discuss with students. Other chapters focus on productive conversations in a mentorship, nitty-gritty issues, body language, and applications. (NB)

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Book 2

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HAND IN HAND: Mentoring Young Women

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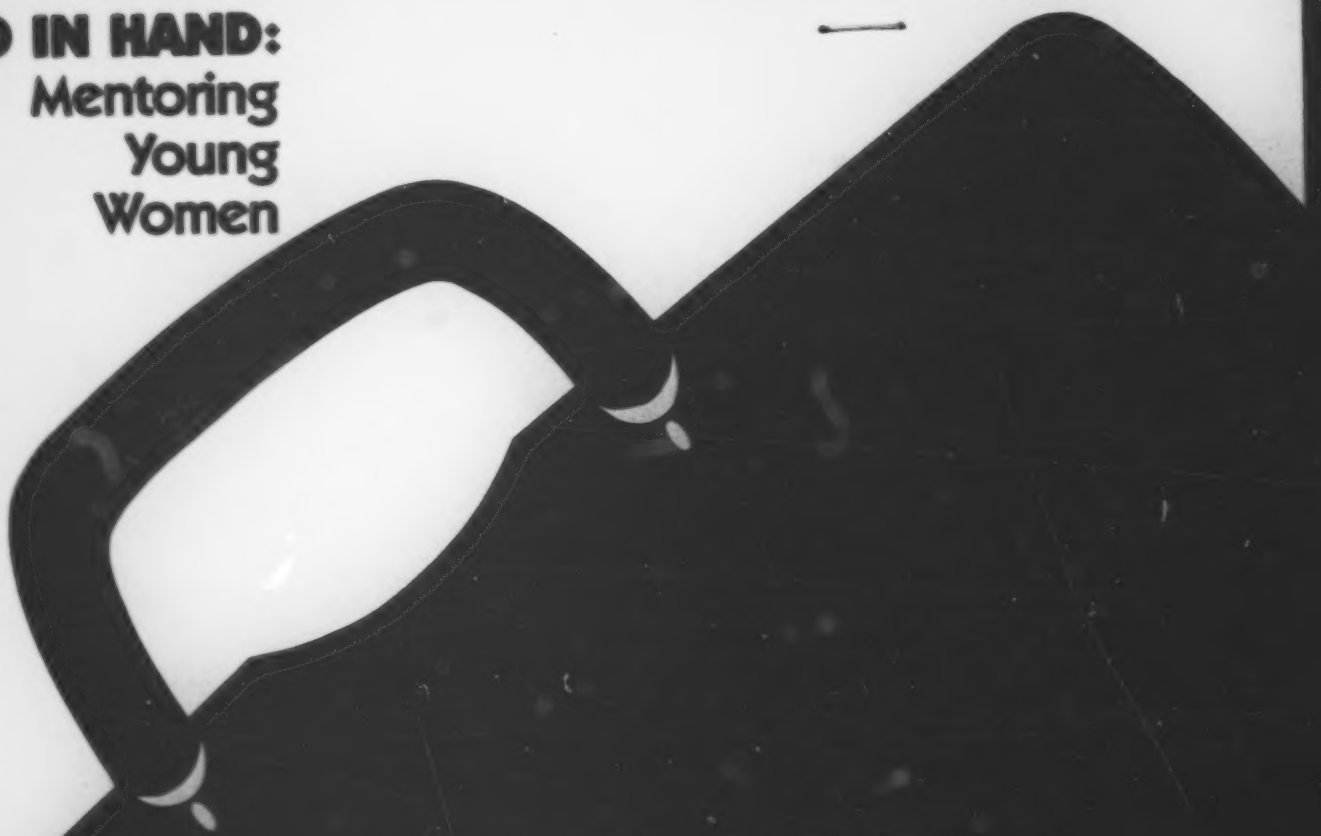

IDEABOOK FOR MENTORS

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Center for Sex Equity
Portland, Oregon

Women's Educational Equity Act Program
U.S. Department of Education

Hand in Hand: Mentoring Young Women

Ideabook for Mentors

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Preface

The material in this publication was developed as part of a two-year project funded by the Women's Educational Equity Act Program. Following is a brief explanation of the project and descriptions of the three products developed in conjunction with it.

A primary goal of the Mentor Project, as it was called, was to increase the motivation of minority young women to pursue occupations and careers that will be in demand in the future. During the first year of the project, twenty-five minority career women in the Portland area were recruited and trained to be effective mentors. These women represented managerial and professional occupations, occupations involving technology, and nontraditional occupations for women. After undergoing training, these women served as mentors for the minority high school girls who participated in the project. A mentorship involved visits by the student to the mentor's place of work and structured activities for the student to complete and reflect upon in a student career journal.

A second goal of the project was to strengthen the capacity of local communities to use mentors as vehicles for ensuring equity in career development programs for youth. To achieve this goal during the first year, a task force made up of key representatives of the schools, the community, and private industry met regularly with the project staff to help identify factors that influence the development and maintenance of collaborative relationships and programs.

During the second year of the Mentor Project, staff used the material developed during the first year to train mentors in already-established mentoring projects in Tucson, Arizona; San Francisco, California; Portland, Oregon; and Seattle, Washington. The primary goal of the second year was to refine training materials and to test their usefulness to various types of mentoring programs. A second goal was to develop a guide that would provide a step-by-step procedure for schools, businesses, or community agencies that want to design and implement mentoring projects.

These goals were realized in the development of a series of publications entitled *Hand in Hand: Mentoring Young Women*, all with the common theme of helping young women at work. The components of this series include this book, *Ideabook for Mentors*, as well as the following products:

Student Career Journal. A workbook for students to use during the mentorship. The *Journal* contains information, activities, and questions for students to consider; it complements the activities described in the *Ideabook*.

Guide for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating a Mentoring Program. A manual for program planners and presenters. The *Guide* contains procedures on how to set up and carry out a mentoring program and how to conduct a mentoring training workshop. It also includes case studies of two successful mentoring programs in the Northwest.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our appreciation to the people who helped to make the Mentor Project and these materials a success. Our task force members met with us several times throughout the course of the project to review the content and format of the materials and to suggest names of potential mentors. The task force consisted of the following people:

Ms. Iris Bell, U.S. Forest Service
Mr. Michael Grice, Portland Public Schools
Dr. Suzanne Hiscox, Intel Corporation
Ms. June Key, Community Representative
Ms. Madeline Moore, Northwest EQUALS
Mr. Tom Nelson, Business Youth Exchange
Mr. Darrell Tucker, Portland Public Schools

Without our mentors, of course, this project would never have happened. Not only did the mentors spend time working with students, but they provided useful suggestions on the training activities and workbook materials for the project. The mentors who participated in our project are named below.

Dr. Dorothy Alexander
Ms. Theresa Banks
Dr. Beth Britton
Ms. Alvenice Brown
Ms. Joan Brown
Ms. Reta Brown
Ms. Robin Butterfield
Ms. Aletha Chavis
Ms. Denise Cooke
Ms. Dorothy Elmore
Dr. Betty Griffin
Ms. Patricia Hall
Ms. Glendia Hatton
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Ms. Monica Little
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Introduction

Adult role models can greatly help a young person get and keep that first big job; they can also be a factor in fostering the long-term motivation so necessary for career advancement. Having a mentor is especially helpful for youth facing unusual barriers to employment or advancement, like young ethnic and minority women. In addition, the use of role models and mentors is an important avenue for motivating minority young women to find out about and enter emerging technological occupations, careers in the sciences, and professional careers such as management, medicine, or law.

The purpose of this *Ideabook* is to prepare you to be an effective mentor for minority young women. This doesn't imply that you may not already *be* effective. It's just that, while many schools have some kind of work-experience program that involves students visiting the workplace, no two programs are the same. Thus the result for a mentor can be an accumulation of slight but perhaps frustrating differences in terms, conditions, or type of student. Since working women of distinct ethnic or racial heritage are in demand as role models and mentors, they are likely to be asked to serve often. So you truly *are* a million-dollar resource, and it makes good business sense to take care of that investment!

This *Ideabook* and the training session accompanying it will give you the skills to make the most out of *any* encounter a student has with you during a work-experience program. It will take you through the nitty-gritty details of getting started and setting ground rules. Further, it will help you decide what to talk about, what to do (and not do) with a student, and how to plant the seeds of long-term career motivation. As a result, you will look forward to working with students because you will know how to help someone else develop an interest in your occupation or career area and possibly pursue the same kind of career that has been satisfying to you.

What should you bring with you to any mentorship? Most of all, we assume you will bring your personal and professional vitality as a worker in a technological, scientific, professional, or nontraditional occupation. In addition, you should be supported by your business organization or agency to act as a mentor for young women, willing to work with a young woman for at least six to eight weeks in a one-on-one situation, able to participate in training that can increase your effectiveness as a mentor, and willing to become part of a community resource bank for similar future activities.

By participating in a training session, you will learn how to use this *Ideabook*, and you will gain the following benefits: activities and learning

techniques that can make work experiences more meaningful for your student; an opportunity for you to reflect on the contributions that you can make as a mentor or role model for young women; an understanding of the demography of minority women relative to economics, families, education, and career choices, tips on sharing "reality" with youth; helping them understand their unique circumstances and choices; and ways to learn how business, industry, community agencies, and schools can better work together to prepare minority young women for productive, challenging, and satisfying work.

Facts and Figures about Women and Work

The plight of women in the work force is quite different from that of men. To achieve personal satisfaction and challenge, women workers must surmount barriers such as role stereotyping. In addition, women are often in the position of being the sole support of family while working at jobs that barely pay well enough to meet their own needs.

It's no secret that more and more minority women are falling into the single head of household and poverty categories. It's also no secret that professional careers, nontraditional occupations, and technology-oriented jobs pay well and offer benefits and rewards that go beyond salary considerations. The following items can be used to discuss the importance of having mentors and role models as sources of encouragement and motivation for young women entering the world of work.

See whether you can provide the correct answers to the questions below before reviewing the answer sheet that follows.

_____ 1. The so-called typical American family—husband earner, wife homemaker, and two children—accounts for what percentage of all American families?

_____ 2. What percentage of mothers with children one year old or younger are in the labor force?

_____ 3. On the average, how much do women earn for every dollar men earn?

_____ 4. According to the "Pink Ghetto Wage Gap," men in secretarial-type positions earn more than women who make up 99 percent of the workers. What percentage of male secretaries' median weekly earnings do female secretaries earn?

_____ 5. What percentage of male information clerks' median weekly earning do female information clerks (who comprise 89 percent of the workers) earn?

_____ 6. The median yearly income for all Black families is $17,000 compared to $30,000 for all white families. What is it for Black and white female-headed families?

_____ 7. What percentage of mothers in poverty are in the labor force?

_____ 8. In 1972, 76 percent of clerical workers were women. What percentage do they make up today?

_____ 9. Women constitute what percentage of electronic engineers, lawyers, and managers/administrators?

_____10. As recently as 1971, women earned only 7 percent of all American law degrees and only 10 percent of all American accounting degrees awarded. How had these percentages changed by the mid-1980s?

_____11. There has been a 300 percent increase in the number of women office holders since 1974. In Congress, what percentage of the seats do women hold?

_____12. By the end of this century, what percentage of Americans will be people of color?

_____13. It is projected that 139,000,000 persons will enter the labor force between now and the year 2000. What percentage of this increase will women, minorities, and immigrants comprise?

_____14. By the year 2000, the number of Hispanic women in the labor force will increase by what percentage?

_____15. By the year 2000, minorities will make up 30 percent of all public school students. What percentage of public school teachers will they be?

Answers about Women and Work

1. 3.7 percent (In 1986, 56 percent of married couples saw both husband and wife work outside the home, compared to 48 percent in 1976.)

2. 52 percent (Three-fifths have children who are toddlers through first graders.)

3. 70 cents (up from 68 cents in 1986)

4. 89 percent

5. 72 percent

6. $9,000 per year for Black female-headed households and $16,000 per year for white female-headed households

7. 42 percent (The median income for women in poverty maintaining a family alone and working full-time was $7,056 in 1986. Women make up two-thirds of minimum wage earners.)

8. 80 percent of clerical workers (Of all employed women, almost 80 percent are nonprofessional workers.)

9. 9 percent of electronic engineers; 15 percent of lawyers; 29 percent of managers/administrators (From "Startling Statements," 1987: 6 percent of dentists, 15 percent of geologists, 17 percent of doctors, 21 percent of chemists, 7 percent of engineers, 8 percent of physicists, 11 percent of architects.)

10. 38 percent of the law degrees, 49 percent of the accounting degrees (White males make up 90 percent of the partners in the country's largest law firms.)

11. 4.7 percent (23 out of 435 in the House, 2 out of 100 in the Senate)
12. 33 percent
13. 90 percent
14. 85 percent
15. 5 percent

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Characteristics of Mentors

What Is a Mentor?

In Homer's epic the *Odyssey*, Mentor was the name of the man to whom Odysseus entrusted his son Telemachus when Odysseus set off on his travels and adventures. From this, the word came to mean "trusted friend and counselor" and has recently been adopted in the business world to refer to a career guide or an executive nurturer.

There are several synonyms for the term, including sponsor, role model, teacher, coach, counselor, and even benefactor. The term "sponsor" generally connotes more power than a mentor—that is, someone who can act on behalf of another to get the choicest assignments, responsibilities, and so on. The phrase "role model" seems to imply a more casual or even one-sided arrangement; in some instances a role model might be completely unaware that she or he is being perceived as a career model by someone else. In the context of this *Ideabook*, however, a mentor is someone who consciously serves as a career role model for a student.

The various synonyms can also convey different qualities of a mentor. For example, a role model is likely to be a source of inspiration about a particular career; a sponsor is likely to be someone with a vested interest in a mentee's advancement; and a peer or colleague is likely to be the source of an informal or coaching relationship.

In its broadest sense, mentorship can be thought of as providing a variety of information, guidance, and helping activities. In the context of the *Ideabook*, the terms "mentor" and "career role model" are used interchangeably, with a strong emphasis on highlighting some of the teaching and learning functions of the mentor/student work experience.

Why a Mentor Is Important

To teach about a job. A mentor shows not just cognitive understanding but a firsthand, concrete experience of the skills, tools, tasks, timelines, and pressures involved. The realities of a job often differ from the ideal perception of the job. For example, in the words of one mentor, "Students lose the 'Marcus Welby' concept of a doctor and begin to think in terms of bookkeeping and the logistics

of running an office, or 4:00 A.M. emergency room duty." Embedded throughout all the specific pieces of work are the underlying values and motivations that drive a profession or trade.

To serve as a vehicle for self-discovery and for developing personal skills and habits. Having a mentor can increase the self-esteem and confidence of students and help them to expand their horizons.

To give support, encouragement, and advocacy. Minority women face the added stresses of challenging ethnic or racial as well as gender traditions. In addition, they may run into strong family or peer-group resistance to their career plans and goals. Support and encouragement are crucial in overcoming these pressures.

To provide access and advancement in underrepresented occupational areas. Mentors are most important at early career stages when much depends on the student having the motivation to persist and persevere while preparing for and starting in an occupation. Mentors should give advice on courses of study as well as information about equipment and tools.

Having a mentor can increase the chances of students getting full-time jobs if they apply for them. This counters the tendency to be satisfied with part-time work or to get channeled into work that is not related to career interests.

Finally, a mentor can combat the isolation and fragmentation experienced by women in underrepresented occupations by strengthening the bonds of friendship and networking.

To foster economic and financial independence. It has been found that having a mentor is especially important for single employed mothers, 42 percent of who live at or below the poverty level. Since minority women are becoming a larger and larger percentage of those single mothers, mentors can offer significant encouragement for minority women to aspire to and achieve higher-paying jobs and professional growth.

To help overcome obstacles. Subtle but persistent barriers deter women in general and minority women in particular from scientific and technical fields, from the trades and nontraditional occupations, and from professional careers. This condition is illustrated by the following quotation from Jo Shuchat Sanders.

> It is rare for women to be actively excluded from vocational and technical programs or from the jobs themselves. Instead the status quo in recruitment, training, hiring and job retention operates unintentionally to discourage women from considering these nontraditional careers.*

Perhaps successful mentorships can ultimately help to soften and reshape the organizational rigidity that has evolved from long-standing traditions, patterns, and perceptions.

The Qualities a Mentor Needs

In no particular order, the following qualities have all been cited as important for a mentor to possess:

- willingness to invest time and energy in the professional development of a student

* J. Shuchat Sanders, "How to Double Our Skilled Workforce," *Vocational Education* 57, no. 7 (October 1982).

- conviction of or belief in the potential of young women to contribute to the work force
- some measure of experience, skill, advancement, recognition, or achievement in one's own occupation or career
- awareness of and confidence in one's style of interaction and work
- high standards and expectations of oneself and one's work colleagues
- enthusiasm and a sense of humor
- clear and effective communication skills, including the ability to express a point, defend a position, and confront "hard" issues without getting overly aggressive or judgmental

If you are interested in being a mentor, you probably possess some, if not all, of these attributes. Participating in mentor training will help you to sharpen your skills so that you can be even more effective with a student.

Tips for Being an Effective Mentor

We all have busy work lives, and many things can "slip through the cracks." The tips below are commonsense items you should bear in mind as you meet with students. Take a few minutes every now and then to look over these items. They will help make the time you spend with a student more enjoyable for both of you.

Organization Related

- Let your coworkers know in advance when a student will be there so that they can help the student feel at ease.
- Introduce the student to as many of your colleagues as possible.
- Explain employee standards to the student. (The student should follow the same codes of behavior, attire, and attendance as employees at a work site.)

Job Related

- Include the student in daily events as appropriate (sitting in on meetings, making delivery runs, etc.).
- Try to explain tasks—as well as the criteria used to judge how well a task is done—clearly and concisely.
- Explain and discuss performance criteria in general. To give a specific example, you might wish to explain how someone in your position is evaluated for promotion.
- Give students hands-on experience with the tools and processes you use in your work.
- Give clear instructions and explanations. When giving a direction, stay with it until you know the student understands what is expected.

Personal

- Be alert to the nonverbal clues a student gives (uneasiness, evasiveness, loss of interest, etc.). Such clues usually mean that something needs clarifying.
- Give students chances to talk about themselves. The better you know them as individuals, the better you'll be able to work with them.
- Help students relate what they're learning to their own needs and interests. If you see that something doesn't make sense to students, talk about it.
- Try to build an atmosphere that promotes acceptance and an exchange of ideas.
- Be a good listener. Give your attention; paraphrase what you hear.
- Give specific feedback on students' ideas and behavior.
- Answer questions directly. If you come to a difficult question, be tactful, but don't dodge it or beat around the bush.
- Try to be consistent. Predictability is a stabilizing factor in a new environment.

Other

- Above all, be yourself.
- Try to end sessions with your student on a positive note.
- Realize that there are no failures in a mentorship. Both you *and* your student will learn as much from mistakes as from successes.

Talking about Your Work

On the following pages is a worksheet for mentors. It will help you identify some specific topics about your work that you can talk about with your student. The sections of the worksheet correspond to similar sections in the *Student Career Journal*, where students are instructed to write down their notes and reactions to conversations about these topics. By the end of the mentorship, your student should have a sense of (1) what it is that you do, (2) what your working conditions are like, (3) the future outlook for your kind of work, (4) how to prepare for and advance in your kind of work, (5) how your work feels, and (6) how your work affects your personal life.

Use the worksheet by making notes about each item in the spaces provided. Try to review the worksheet before each visit from your student, for it will remind you where to steer conversations. Review it after each visit, and check off the items you covered.

While there is no set sequence for covering these topics, they do seem to go together in pairs. "What You Do" and "What Your Work Is Like" overlap some, and it is probably easiest to begin with these two topic areas. After that, you might go on to "The Future and Your Job" and "Job Entry and Preparation," which also complement each other, or you can discuss "How Your Work Feels" and "How Your Work Affects Your Personal Life," which both deal with integrating the personal and professional domains.

Conversations needn't be long or overly technical. For example, fifteen minutes would be adequate time for any one section or topic (unless, of course, the student wants to continue). Try to strike a balance between giving information and asking the student what she thinks or how she would feel.

You may want your first conversation to be about the fact that you will be having regular talks during the mentorship. Clarify with your student that you expect her to participate too. You may want to schedule regular times to talk or let conversations occur spontaneously. If you favor spontaneity, you as the mentor should initiate the first few conversations and establish a pattern.

Finally, remember that it will take several conversations with your student to cover all the material on the worksheet. In fact, you might not even get to all of it in the time that you have with her. So don't worry about trying to cover

every item. If you can give your student an opportunity to glimpse and reflect on even a portion of your work life, you will have planted a small but important seed. It may not bloom for several years, but when it does, your student will remember you as someone who made a difference at the beginning of her career path.

What You Do

_____ General description of your job

_____ Major tasks, subtasks, and specific responsibilities

_____ Equipment or tools you use

_____ What you produce (products, services)

_____ How your job fits into the total organization

_____ Relationship of your job to similar types of work

What Your Work Is Like

_____ Working hours (per day, per week); salary range for this type of occupation; typical fringe benefits (health insurance, retirement plan, credit unions, etc.)

_____ Working environment (indoors or outdoors, travel, hazards, noise, lighting, special clothing)

_____ Unions or professional organizations involved in your work; any federal, state, or local regulations that affect your work

_____ How you spend a typical day

_____ Personal qualities needed for this type of work

_____ History of this kind of work (if relevant)

The Future and Your Job

_____ General opportunities for advancement

_____ Equal advancement opportunities for women and men, regardless of race or ethnicity

_____ Employment projections for the next five to ten years

_____ Effects of technology on your specific job and on your occupation in general (e.g., computers, robotics, laser technology, chemical processing)

_____ Effects of economic conditions on your job (local, regional, national, global)

_____ Other jobs you could do with your skills

Job Entry and Preparation

_____ How you got started in your job

_____ Other jobs you have held, skills you developed from them, and their relationship to your present job

_____ Skills you had to learn specifically for this job; how you acquired them

_____ Skills you developed from life experiences in general

_____ Your recommendations to others for acquiring these skills; suggestions you would give to someone applying for your job

How Your Work Feels

_____ What you like most (and least) about your job

_____ What you would change if you could

_____ Interpersonal skills you find most important in your work and why

_____ Attitudes and values that are important to you and how they are reflected in your work

_____ Obstacles or barriers you had to overcome to get where you are now

_____ Why you chose this type of work

_____ If you are dissatisfied with your work, what you would rather be doing

How Your Work Affects Your Personal Life

_____ Family time

_____ Leisure time

_____ General health/diet/exercise

_____ Stress factor: tension, fatigue, burnout

_____ Stimulation factor: excitement, challenge, opportunity

_____ Where your present job fits into your life: lifetime career or stepping-stone to something else.

Productive Conversations

Sometimes the first few conversations in a mentorship are awkward. This is often the case when a student admires and feels shy with the mentor, and the mentor is trying to put the student at ease. Besides "breaking the ice," the mentor needs to discuss basic expectations and ground rules so that both parties know what will happen and who's to do what. Remember: contact with your student is usually short. The sooner you establish rapport and make expectations known, the more pleasant and productive the sessions will be.

Developing a good working relationship is something like learning to drive a stick-shift car: progress is jerky until you gain experience. These guidelines should help get your relationship with your student off to a smooth start.

Exploring the Student's Personal Interests and Background

1. Classes
   - the ones she likes best or least and the reasons
   - the ones in which she does well or poorly

2. Activities out of school or after school
   - recreational
   - community service, clubs
   - jobs (volunteer or paid)

3. Favorites
   - ways to spend time
   - music
   - books, movies
   - food

4. Typical day
   - getting up, before school
   - classes, activities, people to spend time with
   - evenings
   - family and friends

5. Getting around
   - car (her own, her parents', a friend's)
   - bus, by foot

Setting Expectations

1. Decide on the number and length of mentor/student contacts. Plan the dates and times in advance, at least for the first one to two weeks.

2. Agree on what is appropriate dress.

3. Agree on a procedure for notifying each other if you will be late or absent.

4. Set up definite times to talk over problems. If you find that problem-solving sessions are not necessary, you can always relax the expectation.

5. Let your student know that you will be talking about the items that are in her *Career Journal*. You may wish to use some of the time set aside in item 4 above.

Setting Ground Rules

1. Set up a check-in procedure for your student to use upon arrival.

2. If possible, provide a "home base" or workstation for your student.

3. Allow for breaks during visits if they are longer than two hours.

4. Make it clear how you feel about food, drinks, radios, and noise in your work area.

5. If appropriate, tell your student where she can and can't go within the organization and why.

6. Make your student aware of both the formal and informal systems (e.g., those for requesting appointments or attending meetings).

Nitty-Gritty Issues

During the time that your student spends with you, some situations might arise that could be either left alone or dealt with. While it may feel more comfortable to leave well enough alone, it may be more beneficial in the long run to grapple with hard or sensitive issues. There are never any right answers, but here are some hypothetical incidents that you might encounter with your student. What would *you* do in each case?

1. Your student appears for your first meeting with tricolor, day-glow hair, thigh-high skirt, and a sequin in her nose. She speaks well and is courteous as she introduces herself to you. What is your first impression? What do you say to her?

2. In your discussions with your student, you find deep-seated mistrust of and anger toward white people. You can tell that she expects you to concur with her feelings. How do you deal with this? What do you say?

3. You have met with your student on three occasions, and each time you've seen her, she's looked disheveled. Her blouse is half tucked in, her hair is uncombed, her shoes are scuffed, and so on. Does this concern you? What do you say?

4. Both times that your student has come to see you, you have noticed a strange odor wafting through your office. This smell and the discolored arcs under her armpits suggest poor personal hygiene. How do you deal with this? Do you approach the problem directly? If so, how can you justify making such personal comments to someone you hardly know?

5. Your student seems nice, interested, and cooperative, but when she smiles you can see that her teeth have suffered from neglect. They are discolored and your student has bad breath. Is this your business? What do you say?

6. Your student uses poor grammar. Seldom have you heard so many double negatives and mismatched subjects and verbs in such a short amount of time. Is it sufficient for you to exemplify or model proper speech, or should you talk about it with her? What do you say?

7. Your student talks in Black dialect. You point out that it is fine to do that in other settings, but it is not appropriate in the business world. She becomes defensive and says that she has no intention of changing and, furthermore, if you were true to yourself, you wouldn't need to conform to other people's expectations. What do you do?

8. You've been sitting with your student for half an hour and have yet to hear more than a monosyllabic utterance from her. She is painfully shy. You tell her to relax, and she says that she wants to but just doesn't know how. How can you help her?

9. Your mentorship has had a tremendous influence on your student. Her enthusiasm is infectious and has brightened your day the four times you've seen her. She's intelligent and has good, but not great, grades and tremendous potential. On her fifth visit she bursts into tears. Her family just isn't making it financially, and, as she is the oldest child, she has to quit school now and get a job. What do you say? What do you do?

10. Your student has crossed the boundary from congeniality to overfamiliarity. She calls you by your first name, asks you personal questions, and treats you like a buddy. Is this a good idea? How do you handle it if you think it needs handling?

11. You student's demeanor is loud and unintentionally rude. On the tour of your office, she made highly inappropriate remarks to some of the people she met (e.g., "How do you rate an office with a window?"). How do you tell her that her attempts at small talk and humor are unsuitable?

12. Your student's school counselor calls you to enlist your help. Your student has had a string of unexcused absences and tardies at school. Her grades are beginning to suffer. The counselor feels that, as the student likes you (she's always been on time for your appointments and speaks highly of you), you might have some influence. Should you get involved? To what extent?

13. You student is a dedicated, born-again, fundamentalist Christian and wants the world to know it. Every time you've seen her she has worn an "I Love Jesus" button, and she peppers her speech with "The Bible says," "If you have faith," and "It's a blessing." Do you see this as a problem? How do you talk about it with her?

14. Through subtle clues you detect that your student is becoming emotionally attached to you. She calls almost daily just to say hi, sends you friendship cards, and occasionally brings you gifts. Your relationship is drawing to a close, but her need for contact with you shows no signs of letting up. Now what do you do?

15. In the first two meetings with your student, a comfortable rapport has developed. She comes to your third session looking distraught. She just found out that she is seven weeks pregnant. Her boyfriend dropped her when she told him, and she is convinced that her overbearing father would throw her out of the house if he knew. There is no clergyperson in whom she has confidence, and she's afraid to tell the school counselor. You're the only adult she trusts. She needs your help. How will you give it to her?

16. Your student smokes, and her clothes and breath smell like cigarettes. She hasn't lit up in your presence, but she sometimes exhales smoke as she walks into your office and digs into her purse as soon as she leaves. Is this something you should talk to her about? What do you say?

17. In your meetings with your student you have ascertained that, although she is very sincere, she is of lower than average intelligence. She is smart enough to do many worthwhile jobs and also smart enough to know where the money is. She has decided, partially through your inspiration, that she wants to be either a nuclear physicist or a heart transplant surgeon. Should you counsel her toward more realistic goals? If so, how?

18. Your student is responsible and earns good grades. She works hard at a part-time job and has saved some money toward college. She really needs a car in order to fulfill all her commitments but needs an adult with a steady job to cosign a small loan for the purchase. Also, by process of elimination of family and acquaintances, you're it. What do you do or say when she tells you this? Do you sign? If not, how do you tell her no?

19. You have enjoyed the time you've spent with your student. She has been attentive, has asked good questions, and has good potential. At one of your last meetings, she tells you that she has decided to be a prostitute. Her aunt is one and makes good money. She also likes the flexible hours. She asks your opinion. You give it. What is it?

20. Your student has been an interested and cooperative participant in the program, but during her third or fourth session with you she expresses a genuine concern that women can't have it all. Her aunt has done very well as a lawyer but has had a rough time in her personal life. She is divorced, and her two children spend long hours in day-care and with babysitters. She has little time for a social life. Your student wants a good job but doesn't want it to take over her whole life. She asks you, "Can women really have it both ways?" Be honest. Can they?

21. Your student believes that women entering the trades and professions are taking jobs away from men who have families to support. She thinks it may be okay for a woman to work part-time after the kids are in school so long as she's home to kiss everyone good-bye in the morning and fix dinner at night. She sincerely believes this. What do you tell her?

22. Your student has a boyfriend and wants to bring him to your sessions. You tell her you'd like to meet him, but the sessions are just for the two of you. She agrees, but her boyfriend accompanies her to every session, waits in the outer office, and gives her a big kiss as she walks into and out of you office. Are you comfortable with this? What do you say or do about it?

23. Your student confides to you that she was picked up for shoplifting last week. Because it was her first offense, she was let go, but the incident is on her permanent record. She is afraid of two things: that she'll get the urge to shoplift again and that having a juvenile record will affect her ability to get a job. What do you tell her?

24. Your student displays some of the following kinds of body language in your sessions with her. What do you say, if anything, about her nonverbal behavior?

    - slouches in her chair with her legs apart and her arms draped over the armrest with her hands dangling

- won't look you in the eye; looks everywhere but at you, even when she is talking to you

- snaps her gum while chewing it

- crosses her legs and arms, aims her body away from you, and leans away from you

- taps her fingers, plays with her hair, and clears her throat a lot

25. You've noticed in your talks with your student that she is extremely boastful. She is self-confident to the point of conceit and frequently exaggerates when talking about herself. It becomes obvious that she hasn't traveled as much, accomplished as much, or spent as much as she says; she probably really hasn't dated every member of Michael Jackson's entourage. You see this as a potential problem in an employment situation. How do you talk to her about it?

26. Your student seems to want to be in the program but can't let down her "tough" facade. She talks rough and hides any warm, caring, or sympathetic feelings she might have. How do you break through and get her to relate to you person-to-person instead of rebellious adolescent to adult?

The above situations represent real-life problems that you may encounter if a student enters your life for even a short time. How these situations are discussed or resolved, or whether they are even brought up at all, will depend a lot on the rapport between you and your student. The *Ideabook* sections on "Productive Conversations" and "Body Language" have some helpful hints. In addition, here are a few guidelines that would apply in almost all cases.

- Face the problem. Ignoring it won't make it go away. Inappropriate attitudes and behaviors in the work context will, if they continue, only increase your anxiety level and probably those of your co-workers, too. If a problem is really a problem, it's best to deal with it early, before it gets bigger.

- Think beforehand about what *you* want to accomplish in dealing with a sensitive issue or situation. For example, do you want only to know whether or not the student is aware of a behavior and its effect, or do you want to impart your viewpoint? Do you want to change the student's behavior? Knowing your purpose helps keep things focused.

- Bring things up early in a visit; don't wait till the end of the visit or for an "opportune time" to present itself. There's probably never a good time to bring up a hard topic, and so it's best to get to it right away. You'll never regret how much better you feel after you've discussed and resolved a difficult situation.

- Separate the behavior from the person. Speak objectively about the behavior and positively about the person. For example, "I like your energy, but when you do _____, it puts me in an awkward position."

- Don't overdo humor, teasing, or jokes. Issues presented in a half-joking-but-serious manner will not always be grasped by a teenager. Also, adolescent egos can be unpredictable; what might seem funny one day may not be received in the same vein the next day. The best guideline is

to stay serious but supportive, don't tease or joke, and save humor for lighter times.

- Discuss sensitive issues in a private place, if possible. Think twice about using your office, if you have a private one, because it may feel too formal and stiff if you and your student are not accustomed to meeting and talking there. Private space in the cafeteria, employee lounge, or conference room might be better. You may even want to take a walk and talk out-of-doors.

- Consider relating something personal about yourself during the discussion with your student. For example, tell her about a similar incident in your youth and how you handled it. This kind of self-disclosure and empathy makes you seem real and special to the student, not just another adult giving a lecture.

- Reinforce at a later time something positive about your student, and emphasize that the issue was about behavior, not personality.

Body Language

Much of what we say to others and what others say to us is said without words. It is with this silent language that we often communicate our feelings. By interpreting the nonverbal "speech" of others, we can tell how they are reacting to what we do and say. This silent language, also called *body language*, consists of

- facial expressions
- eye contact
- gestures
- body movement and posture
- tone of voice
- use of personal and public space
- dress, appearance, and hygiene

You probably have become uncomfortable when a stranger stood too close to you at a bus stop or in line at a movie. You became uncomfortable because that person violated your sense of personal space. You know you can end a conversation by turning your back on someone or by breaking eye contact. This type of body language tells a person that you *don't want to talk anymore*.

Each culture gives different interpretations to the silent language. For instance, making strong eye contact in one culture may be perceived as friendly while in another it may be perceived as aggressive.

All of us know and respond to several silent languages. As a member of an ethnic group, you know the silent language of that group. You know also the body language of other groups to which you belong, such as professional colleagues or social acquaintances. Teenagers are also aware of the silent language of their peers and how it differs from that of the adults around them. For example, if young people shake hands firmly with adults, they will be received positively. Yet if they were to shake hands with their peers in the hallway between classes or at a dance, they would probably be perceived as acting silly, because they have their own ways of acknowledging each other.

Many times we have to adapt our behavior to the situation. What may be appropriate with friends or family won't be appropriate in the work setting. What is appropriate in the work setting won't always be appropriate with friends or family. Sometimes the differences are slight and don't mean anything; other times, they may cause significant misunderstandings.

In the workplace adults have certain expectations of young workers. As a mentor, you will need to be aware of how your body language affects your student. Are you conveying expectations accurately? Are you giving clear messages or mixed messages? Furthermore, you will need to interpret your student's body language to find out how you are being received or how the student is feeling about her experience.

Following are some tips about body language that will help your student come across as an interested and willing worker. Look them over, share them with your student, and let her know what she says with her nonverbal speech.

- good posture (standing and sitting)
- nodding head to show attention
- leaning toward the speaker
- enunciating clearly
- showing pleasant and sincere facial expressions
- maintaining eye contact
- being neatly groomed
- talking in an animated style, using small hand gestures and facial expressions
- having vocal variety (avoiding a monotone)
- appearing calm (not fidgeting)
- sitting close enough to show openness/friendliness, but not too close
- shaking hands firmly

All of us need to become more aware of the messages we give and receive through the use of body language so that we are better able to express what we want to say and understand what others are telling us.

Applications

Comment Cards

This is an ongoing activity. Each day (or visit), mentor and student each write one thing on a card and post it in a mutually agreed-upon place for the other to read. Either of you may suggest a topic, or you may take turns. If each of you has a topic, then include both topics on that day's comment card. Suggested topics might be as follows:

- What are you looking forward to most today?
- What was your biggest accomplishment yesterday (or last time)?
- What was your biggest challenge yesterday (or last time)?
- What is one thing you want to accomplish today?
- What is one thing that I don't know about you yet?

You may decide to make this activity cumulative and to keep posting new cards without taking down the previous cards. Or you may want to remove the cards each time. Either way, comment cards are intended to stimulate discussion.

This activity emphasizes three things that most of us don't do often enough: (1) share positive things about ourselves (blowing our own horns), (2) "go public" about inner thoughts and values, and (3) ask for information from others.

Whether or not and how much you use this technique will depend on the natural rapport that develops between you and your student, and whether or not she needs to be drawn out more.

Facts and Figures

Plan time during one of your discussion periods to talk about some (or all) of the "Facts and Figures" questions (see pp. 2–4). Explore with your student whether she feels she has no choice but to be "one of the statistics" or whether she feels she has the power to shape her future.

You may want to post some of the questions to arouse your student's curiosity, or post them as statements of facts. (Similar to the comment cards, have a posting area or bulletin board space for these interesting tidbits.)

Heroes in My Life

Set aside one of your early discussion times to talk about heroes, role models, and mentors and why they are (or were) important. Use your listening, paraphrasing, and probing skills to draw your student into full participation.

Near the end of the mentorship, take time to talk with your student about what she might look for in future mentors and career role models.

What's What and Who's Who

Your student can learn about your job setting by touring your workplace and by meeting or possibly interviewing different people in your organization. She may even want to create an organizational chart showing main functions, support functions, and lines of authority, all of which can then be compared to an actual company chart.

Be sure to lay the groundwork with your colleagues for this activity by informing them about your mentorship and by alerting staff in advance that your student may be touring the facility or requesting interviews with them. If you won't be conducting the tour, make arrangements for someone else (e.g., personnel staff) to do it.

Before the tour, tell your student what she will be doing and why, and what she should look for (see below). If necessary, remind her of expected interview manners and office protocol (how to schedule meetings, when to interrupt, etc.). Assist your student as needed during her tour.

By examining the mentor's workplace, the student can become aware of the variety of functions, support systems, technologies, and personnel of workplaces in general. After the tour, discuss what your student found out about the company and the different kinds of work performed there. Encourage your student to reflect on the value of different kinds of jobs.

Information for a Facilities Tour

Have your student find out the following information about your company as she makes her tour. A corresponding worksheet is in your student's *Career Journal.*

1. What is the formal system like?
   - its primary purpose
   - its product
   - its service (if a service organization)
   - customers or clients
     - children
     - adults
     - other companies
     - people in trouble
   - specifics of the product or service
     - cost
     - profit or nonprofit
     - who designs the product or service
     - who makes the product or delivers the service
   - internal communication (e.g., newsletters, memorandums)
   - technology used, especially computers

2. What is the support system like?

- clerical
- accounting
- mailroom
- custodial
- research
- other (e.g., media/duplicating)

3. What is the informal system like?
   - What is considered appropriate attire? Does it differ for men and women? For different job categories?
   - What do the personal items on desks and walls tell you about different people?
   - What "social functions" take place (e.g., breaks, group lunches) and where (e.g., in the coffee room, in the hallway)?